

The

Alcester Grammar



M.D.C.

NOBISCUM

CHRISTUS

STATE.

School Record

March, 1942.

Alcester Grammar School Record.

No. 71

MARCH, 1942.

EDITOR—MR. V. V. DRULLER.

COMMITTEE—

M. AUSTIN, J. PLESTERS, D. SAVAGE, STEWART.

Our School Badge.

It has been suggested that present scholars would welcome details of the history and origin of the School Badge. An account of it was given by Mr. Wells, the former headmaster of the Alcester Grammar School, in the "Record" of December, 1925, and we feel that we cannot do better than quote his article.

"Almost every honourable family or community" writes Mr. Wells, "has its badge or sign, which the members are proud to wear to show that they belong to it. So one of the first things that I had to think about when this school was very young was what our colours and our badge should be. The colours were soon decided, but the badge was a more difficult matter, as I wished it to be both suitable for a school and to have some definite and interesting connection with this district. After much vain searching a consultation with Dr. Smith, who is well known to Alcester boys and girls, resulted in our spending an evening examining his collection of old coins to see if there might be any device on one of them that would serve our turn. The coins were found during excavations in ground not far from where the school now stands. Many of them were Roman, but were so much worn by exposure that it was difficult to make out what was on them. At last, however, we found one upon which was the figure of a Roman soldier holding a standard, and on the standard was a monogram consisting

of the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. This monogram told us that the coin must be of the time of the Emperor Constantine the Great, who ruled in Britain about 306 A.D., and whose soldiers very likely tramped down our road. Of Constantine the following legend is told. When marching towards Rome to attack his rival, Maxentius, he is said to have seen in the sky a shining cross, with the inscription, "By this conquer!" And the night before the final and decisive battle with Maxentius a vision is said to have appeared to him in his sleep, bidding him inscribe the shields of his soldiers with the monogram of the name of Christ. In this manner legend relates that Constantine became a Christian The soldier with his standard satisfied my feeling that our badge ought in some way to be connected with the town, and it does this, for the coin was found upon the spot, and it also points to the town's Roman origin. It also seemed to me a most suitable emblem for a school like ours, especially when there was added to it the motto, 'Christus nobiscum, State!'—'Christ is with us, stand fast!'—words which might very well have been spoken by one of Constantine's standard bearers at a critical moment in the fight, and which we also may do well to remember when times of difficulty come to us.

There only remain the letters M.D.C. to be explained. These give the date, 1600, of the foundation of Newport's Grammar School in Alcester. The original old school was merged in this one when this school started in 1912, and it seemed right that the date of its foundation should be preserved."

School Register.

Valete.

*Brand, A. W. (VI.), 1936-41.	Ewins, L. (Low. V.), 1940-41.
*Collett, D. G. W. (VI.), 1933-41.	Purkis, J. B. S. (Low. V.), 1941.
*Goode, D. C. K. (VI.), 1933-41.	Anslow, W. N. (Upp. IVB.), 1939-
Bradley, J. M. (Upp. V.), 1937-41.	41.
*Cheffins, M. A. (Upp. V.), 1940-41.	Eadie, I. J. (Upp. IVB.), 1940-41.
Sheppard, R. W. (Upp. V.), 1940-41.	Lloyd, J. M. (IIIb.), 1941.
Spencer, D.E.W. (Upp. V.) 1930-41.	Hill, B. S. (Rem.), 1940-41.
Betterton, B. W. (Low. V.), 1941.	Lye, J. R. (i), 1941.
Emms, R. J. (Low. V.), 1941.	

*Prefect.

Salvete.

Baldwin, M. (Upp. IVB.).	Kingsbury, C. H. (ii).
Birch, M. (Low. IVB.).	Laughton, V. E. (i).
Bond, B. W. (i).	Lloyd, J. E. (Rem.).
Bond, W. D. (ii).	Mortimer, D. G. (Upp. IVA.).
Butler, P. F. D. (IIIB.).	Paskins, B. D. W. (i).
Clarke, W. J. (ii).	Riley, M. J. (i).
Gilbert, G. (ii).	Seccombe, C. I. (i).
Harvey, A. (Upp. IVB.).	Seccombe, J. G. (ii).
Hawthorn, T. A. (ii).	Smith, V. E. (IIIA.).
Hawthorn, S. B. (ii).	Wardell, R. E. (i).
Hilditch, M. (Low. IVB.).	

There have been 348 pupils in attendance this term.

Old Scholars' Guild News.

President.

MR. C. T. L. CATON.

Hon. Secretary.

S. G. BIDDLE.

Hon. Treasurer

H. T. HEWLETT.

For the first time since the Guild's foundation no Christmas Reunion was held in 1941. The Committee after much consideration have decided that for the remainder of the war one Reunion only shall be held each year, and, in view of the increasing shortage of petrol and unrationed foodstuffs, the usual winter meeting be allowed to lapse. It is, however, hoped that the summer meetings will make up for this, and will be well attended, both by the regular supporters and by new members.

This year the proceeds of the New Year's dance were for the benefit of Mrs. Churchill's "Aid to Russia" fund. A very enjoyable evening was spent by a large number of the Old Scholars and friends, and the Secretary was able to send a cheque for £7 10s. to Mrs. Churchill. It is hoped that a further dance will be arranged shortly.

All Old Scholars will have been very surprised and sorry to hear of Mr. Hall's departure, and the Secretary feels that he can with confidence express the unanimous wish of the Guild for a very happy retirement. We all hope that Mr. Hall will see his way to join us at some of our reunions. Meanwhile, at the request of numerous Old Scholars, a subscription list has been opened to present him with some little memento of our gratitude for all that Mr. Hall has meant to us for so many years. A very ready response has already been forthcoming; any further subscriptions should be sent as soon as possible either to Mr. Caton or to the Secretary.

It is only to be expected that this section of the "Record" should this term be less "newsy" than usual. The fact that the winter reunion was not held prevented us from gathering a number of items of news. Then again, numerous details of interest which have reached us we cannot print, as their publication would not be in the national interest. It must suffice for the present to say that very large numbers of Old Scholars are engaged, both at home and abroad, in one way and another, in the fight for victory. Of those in the fighting forces some are to be found on ships escorting convoys; some are in various parts of West Africa; some are in the Middle East; one, we are given to understand, entertained a group of scholars by roaring several times over the school in a Spitfire; one was reported some time ago as being in Canada; at least one has been in Iceland; while a few, we fear, were in Singapore at the time of its fall.

There are however a few scraps of information that can be given. Mrs. Wickett (née Vera Wood), the second part of whose article on Malaya is included in this issue, had her home near Kuala Lumpur. Owing to illness she had gone to Australia, and so escaped the Japanese invasion of the peninsula. No news so far has been received of her husband, whom she had left behind. Mrs. Wickett is hoping to return before long to England.

Mrs Smallwood (née Kathleen Perks), who has in the past written for the "Record" several articles on New Zealand, had moved during 1941 into Malaya, and was

living as recently as the middle of November at Kuala Lumpur. It is learnt, however, that both she and her husband succeeded in leaving Malaya, for a cable was sent by them from Java in the middle of February.

It is with much regret that we record the death of Leslie Barnett. In our last issue we reported that he was missing. Subsequently news came through that he was a prisoner of war in Greece, and shortly afterwards notification was received that he had succumbed to pneumonia.

Hearty congratulations to Sam Styler (scholar 1928-33) on being awarded a commission in the R.A.P.C.

Also to Harry Sisam (scholar 1917-29) who is now a lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

And to Sydney Gothard (scholar 1913-25) on his appointment in November as Superintending Civil Engineer at the Admiralty, at a city in the south-west. For the previous fifteen months he had been Officer in Charge of Works at one of H.M. dockyards in the south-east.

We apologise for an error last term in recording the success of Stella Stevens. The examination which she had passed was the Assistants' Examination of the Society of Apothecaries of London.

It has been found impossible to play the usual football match with the school this term, but we hope to be able to put in the field a cricket eleven which will give the school team a good game next term.

Finally, the Committee joins in sending heartiest greetings to all Old Scholars, particularly those serving in His Majesty's Forces, both at home and abroad. May the time be not far distant when we shall all be able to gather together again and enjoy the first post-war reunion.

Births.

On December 23rd, to Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Brown (née Connie Dowdeswell)—a son.

On February 3rd, to Mr. and Mrs. K. Spence (née Joyce Blakeman)—a daughter.

On February 6th, to Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Bond (née Lydia Earp)—a son.

Marriages.

On September 6th, at Weston-under-Wetherley, Stephen Jones to Josephine Lane (scholar 1923-34).

On January 27th, at Banbury, Norman Jeffcoat (scholar 1919-25) to Marjorie Lloyd.

On February 15th, at Headless Cross, John James Savage (scholar 1927-31) to Olive Mary Roach.

On March 5th, at Evesham, William Gordon Humphreys to Anne Steele (scholar 1928-33).

Death.

In January, as a prisoner-of-war, Leslie Stephen Barnett (scholar 1922-27), aged 31 years.

Mr. S. Hall: An Appreciation.

A brief announcement was made last term of the retirement of Mr. S. Hall, who had been Senior Master at Alcester Grammar School since its opening in 1912. It seems only fitting that his departure from the school to which he has devoted so many years should not be allowed to pass without some appreciation of his work being put on record.

A capable and inspiring teacher, he was responsible for the Science department for nearly thirty years, and a number of his pupils have secured important appointments. From the very first, also, he interested himself keenly in the many activities of the school. Naturally athletic, he helped

Mr. Wells to build up the football and cricket teams, being himself a player of no small ability at both games. To him the success of the series of annual Sports Days is very largely due, and in them he displayed his organising power, his love of method and punctuality. The possessor of a pleasant baritone voice, he appeared frequently in the early programmes of the Musical Society. Since his marriage in 1931 he has lived outside Alcester, and has not played so large a part in the out-of-class activities; but in 1940 he organised the school Cadet Corps, of which he remained Commanding Officer until his retirement.

Under a somewhat stern exterior those who came in close contact with him have found hidden—and not very deep—a kind and sympathetic personality. To countless pupils he has proved a true friend; no trouble was too great for him when he gave help. Many a boy has to thank him for using his influence to secure for him a good situation on leaving school. This interest in his pupils is illustrated by the part he played in the formation of the Old Scholars' Guild and by his support over a long period of this organisation, of which he was a popular president for the year 1929-30. Old Scholars will find it difficult to picture Alcester Grammar School without "Uncle Sid," as he was affectionately known to so many of them.

Mr. Hall has been appointed a director of a Midland firm, his work being chiefly on armaments. All wish him happiness in his retirement from the teaching profession and long life and success in his new career.

In Malaya (Continued)

Our household consists of two Chinese houseboys, an Amah (also Chinese), a gardener (Indian), two dogs and a cat. The houseboys are brothers, the elder being the cook and known as "Cookie," and his brother, younger by about ten years, being aged sixteen, is houseboy and known as Boy. Amah—Malay for "Mother"—has her share of work to do also. This is a very modest household; most Europeans have a Malay syce (chauffeur), two or three houseboys, and in the case of a family, an Amah for each child. All Europeans live an exaggerated existence which sounds wonderful but means nothing at all; I cannot stress this fact too strongly. The Asiatics firmly believe that all Europeans are

helpless, quite incapable of doing the simplest task for themselves. The idea originated in pioneer days when women, hampered by tight, clumsy clothes, found the damp heat too exhausting and were only too glad to recline on long chairs all day, leaving any form of exertion to the natives who were used to the climatic conditions. Times have changed, electric fans and air-conditioned rooms have rendered the climate more congenial to the European, but the outlook of the native remains unchanged. It was many months before our boys fully realised that their Mem was quite capable of taking an active part in the running of the household and was by no means content to sit under an electric fan all day giving orders and occupied with a little genteel knitting or sewing. The gardener also was horrified when he found me on my hands and knees weeding, and fully thought it was his job to stand by, waiting on me in case I should require the trowel, the fork, or a piece of string. My Malay vocabulary at that time was limited, but I soon made him understand that I could manage by myself and that there was plenty of work in the garden for both of us at any time.

I must mention here that I am known as 'Mem,' borrowed from the Indian 'Mem-Sahib.' My husband is called 'Tuan,' the Malay word for 'Sir' or 'Master.' The communal language is Malay, the simplest language in the world to learn and to speak. Owing to the spread of education, most Asiatics, even some of the Mine coolies, speak English. Incidentally a great problem is being caused by this spread of education; this has been revealed by the disturbing number of strikes in recent months. The coolie's son is not content to tap rubber trees, and shovel earth in open caste mines; he has been to school, has been taught to think a little, can speak fluent English, has passed examinations which would qualify him as a clerk in any office; but there are not the jobs for these people, as my husband has to explain to ambitious aspirants for a stool in the Mine Office day after day. It is my invariable custom to take a walk every morning before the sun is strong, and usually I meet some schoolchildren running to catch the train for school in Kuala Lumpur. At first they used to greet me with a shy "Good morning! Madam," but one day one little girl fell into step beside me. Forgetting the golden rule of 'When in doubt, speak English,' I asked her in Malay where she went to school. The reply was, "I go to the Pudu English School, where Miss Foss is headmistress, but she has gone

to Australia for three months' holiday and Mrs. Brand is the temporary head." Believe me, I felt very dashed. There was this little Indian girl, very neat in her heliotrope tunic, white blouse, white shoes and socks, with a satchel on her back, speaking my own language, more charmingly and more correctly than many English children. Another day I asked her what she hoped to do on leaving school. She said very earnestly, "I would like to go to Bombay University; I will be able to do so if I can get a scholarship." Not night school in Kuala Lumpur, or college in Singapore, but Bombay University, no less; I could not have felt more surprised had she expressed a desire to go to Bedford College or Girton.

Sungei Besi Mines consist of the old mine and the new mine. The coolies in the new mine are Chinese, and the majority in the old, Indians. A small percentage of Malays work in both. In addition there are six European Tuans, including the manager. The new mine, which our house overlooks, resembles a vast Roman theatre, and the equivalent of the arena seethes with life; enormous navvies dig cavern-like jaws into the hard earth and deposit their haul into trucks. Gangs of coolies do similar work, using shovels with the metal part bent at right angles to the wooden handle; then locomotives drive seven or eight trucks to the incline where they are hauled up the slope and taken to the plant where the tin is separated from the waste. So it goes on, day in, day out, night in, night out, when the mine, lit by thousands of electric lights, twinkles like a child's conception of fairyland, and mystic figures flit to and fro, lending enchantment to the common places revealed by day.

Have I disappointed you by telling you of our highly-civilised life in Malaya? Did you want lurid stories of man eatng tigers, miles and miles of jungle and mosquito infested swamps? Would it have been more thrilling if I had had adventures with adders and other reptiles, and slept with a revolver under my pillow? Well, one does hear of a tiger being shot occasionally, and there are miles of jungle and miles of rubber trees too. Science is rendering the mosquito menace less pernicious yearly, though I have had malaria three times. One day, I came from my walk to find a long black snake crossing the drive towards the house, but the gardener killed it instantly, and as for a revolver, the only one that I have ever seen was carried by

a European Police Tuan during a strike on a rubber estate.

One last word—If you hear anyone refer to this Peninsula as "Malay," you may tell the person with all the aggravating superiority of which you are capable, that there is no such country.—Either call it the Malay Peninsula or Malaya. It is, and has been a wonderful experience living here, but it will be more wonderful still to return to England in about eighteen months' time.

V.W.

The "Frige."

Translated into English the word "frige" is a refrigerator or an apparatus for freezing; but I am not going to tell you about the thing one puts food in, but our classroom, namely the Sixth Form room. Previously we were a floating form, often having to try and work in the corridor, under the stairs. On every side there was noise; one class was having a dancing lesson, another singing, a third was reciting Latin declensions, and upstairs a violin lesson was in progress. In order to begin work in such surroundings, it was first necessary to put up a table, find some chairs and procure our patent ink pot, namely an old tin with about half an inch of ink in the bottom.

However, after about two terms of this, we were promoted; a room—at least it had a roof, but the walls are imperfect barriers against the wind because the boards do not meet—was allotted to us. So far, so good! but where were we to put our books, on what could we write or even sit? Chairs and tables were found, but there was difficulty about a cupboard. Eventually a queer-looking contraption arrived, which appeared to have previously been used in the woodworkshop and consisted of four uprights, with boards fixed across at intervals. On such an elaborate side-board, you can imagine that it is not easy to find one's own books; and much less easy is it to keep it tidy. Another difficulty then arose, for the so-called cupboard consisted of shelves towering much higher than even the tallest boy in the form could reach; so they are obliged to mount upon a chair in order to get their books. Of course we have to be careful not to sit down on a chair before dusting the seat, for the boys' boots are not always quite free from dust, and navy blue tunics are very partial to dust.

I forgot to mention earlier that up till now it has been a classroom minus a door. Many brilliant suggestions were

made, but the best seemed to be that we should procure a screen to stop the draught. However this served its purpose only until the outer door was opened, and the screen fell down upon us. After several such accidents a door was added to the room, but this did not always stop the cold air penetrating our abode, and frequently, on arriving at school, we found the ink frozen and the general atmosphere greatly resembling a refrigerator. On such occasions we have donned our overcoats and sat down to work as if we were on the top of Mount Blanc.

These are only a few of the trials which we have to endure. For one thing it is impossible to hear the school bell except when there is dead silence; and after several late arrivals at assembly, a clock was installed. However, even this dwelling place is not without its entertainments, for when we are feeling tired, we have only to look up to watch the birds building their nests, and if we leave open the door, we are certain of a visit from a stray dog.

E.A.A. (VI).

Notes and News.

The Spring Term began on January 15th, and ends on March 31st.

A number of new prefects have been appointed this term; they are J. Buller, O. Davies, M. Goodall, B. North; Arnold, Hunt and Ore.

The Sides captains are:—**Brownies**: A. Aspinwall, D. Villers, Smith; **Jackals**: K. Wilson, M. Barker, Arnold; **Tomtits**: D. Savage, P. Cresswell, Collins.

This term we welcome Mr. W. Thornton, who has joined the Staff to teach Science; also Miss G. D. Mobbs, who is teaching English during the absence, through illness, of Miss Greaves.

Mr. Druller has been appointed Senior Assistant Master in succession to Mr. Hall.

The weather so far this term has been exceptionally cold. In the second week attendance of pupils was seriously affected by some heavy falls of snow, which interrupted the

'bus services and rendered the roads so bad that a mere handful of pupils reached school for a few days. Since then there have been several less heavy snowfalls, and a long spell of frosty weather, which has continued over half term. No football or hockey has been possible until after the end of February.

Each term the number of pupils coming to school by the various 'buses grows larger. The Redditch 'bus (usually a double-decker) brings close on eighty; the blue 'bus from Stratford is full to overflowing; the Inkberrow 'bus conveys about twenty-five; while the Birmingham 'bus carries something approaching a score from Mappleborough Green and beyond.

On Friday, January 30th, a lecture on Hong Kong was given to Form VI, Upper and Lower V, by Commander Partington.

Half term was Monday, February 23rd.

The French and German Reference Library has been transferred to the Upper Fifth classroom, while the Science Library has moved to the Chemistry Laboratory.

Many thanks to Joyce Jackson for her gift of a set of books to the Reference Library.

The Seasons.

Spring is when the flowers bloom,
And every flower comes out so soon;
But if a rough wind blows one day,
It almost blows their heads away.

Summer is when the hot sun comes out,
In the blue sea we splash about;
The donkeys gallop along the sands,
The children hold tightly with both hands.

Autumn is when the leaves turn brown;
The wind blows them fluttering to the ground,
Like other trees seen everywhere,
The evergreens never look cold and bare.

Winter is when the snow floats down;
It makes the older people frown,
I think Winter is fun, don't you?
Spring, Summer, and Autumn too.

JEAN MEGAINNEY (Low. IVA).

Sounds.

Have you ever realised how sounds—abstract things—convey as much, and are as dear to us as sights? Nearly all the movements of man and nature are accompanied by their own distinctive sounds, and every crackle and thud we hear immediately conjures up a picture in our minds.

The rustle of stiff silk creates for me a world of crinolines and fans, and soft sweet music; where handsome cavaliers bow homage to their gracious ladies. The quick click of a hockey stick presents a crowd of modern females, flying with hair astream and arms akimbo in swift pursuit of a rolling ball which ever changes course and mocks their panting labours.

A much more graceful scene appears with the soft swish of skates on ice, but the pure harmony of sound and movement ends as a dull thud finds some soul knowing that ice is hard. What is more soothing than the sound of flowing streams or rain gently dripping among the shower-washed leaves? but what more painful than the short quick jab of sound as water first encounters the tin bottom of a bucket? However, there is great fun in the game of guessing just how full a vessel is, from the tone of the running water, which rises to a high falsetto, protesting as the article is filled.

Have you ever awakened to the sound of a low “crunch-crunch” and a wrenching, tearing noise as if a dozen tailors are together ripping cloth? If not, then may I warn you that there is probably a cow eating ivy off your wall, and that it certainly behoves you to get up and drive her home. But even this is preferable to lying listening in silent agony to that low thud beneath the bed; those groans inside the wardrobe; that hooting of the owl fore-telling death; that ominous flapping of the curtain. No words can quite express the joy then felt at sounds which hail the dawn.

Besides the usual clink of cups and roar of fires, most houses have one sound peculiar to themselves. Now our house has a certain pantry door; a door which has as much of personality as any wooden thing I know. It opens with a click of its own, and then proceeds to grumble in a low pathetic tone till it is half-way opened. Then in an anguish of distress its shout gets quickly louder till it reaches quite a demoniac yell. Then closing, it reverses its laments and with a final groan, subsides to sullen silence. I have only

heard one other door like this, and at the familiar sound a sudden wave of home-sickness swept over me, making me realise what a large part of home was this old complaining door with its knotted boards, and four round holes, like eyes through which the cool air from the cellar whistles.

Talking about whistles, have you ever tried to emit one as you speak a letter "s"? It is quite an amusing pastime; but if you cannot manage it, I am certain that certain members of last year's Upper Sixth would be willing to teach you at a very low fee. Also, for a little extra, they might be induced to teach you how to lisp in the most polished manner. However, I warn you that though "lithping" and "whithling" are uproarious fun the first day, they only raise an indulgent smile on the second, and by the end of the week, the proud performer risks being slung out of the window.

The clock is now ticking loudly towards midnight; an aeroplane throbs its way through the blackness of the sky above. Half-hearted splinters come from the dying fire; and I, wearily gazing on the sleeping cat, decide that my pen has scratched through the stillness of the night quite long enough.

D. A. SAVAGE (VI).

The Matchstick and the Candle.

Said the matchstick to the candle,
"I'm of more use than you.
You have someone to light you,
And that is what I do."
Said the candle to the matchstick,
"I'm used for lighting a room;
You may be used to light me with,
But you burn out very soon."
Said the matchstick to the candle,
"You take up much more space;
A hundred of me would go in a purse,
But of you in a packing-case."
Said the candle to the matchstick,
"I know you cannot fight;
But soon there'll be a battle of flames,
To see which one is right."
Said the matchstick to the candle,
"Don't let us start a war;
We're both of equal use to men,
And that is what we're for."

VALERIE SHARP (Form IIIA).

Pharmacy as a Career.

Do you know what Pharmacy is? I didn't until just over a year ago. Please don't say it is something to do with the study of farms. Being an apprentice to Pharmacy, I am in a position to let you into a few of the secrets of the profession. To do this, it would be best to give you an extract from my diary, and I will leave you to form your own opinions. The extract is slightly expanded to make it appear less disjointed.

We start on Sunday, November 30th.

5 p.m.—Complete with attaché case containing my iron rations for the next day (and did they weigh heavy!) I run to catch the 'bus to S

5.15 p.m.—Arrived safely and greeted at door by Mr. Assistant and Lady Dispenser, my fellow fire-watchers. Race up to the third storey, switch on electric fire and proceed to fire-watch.

5.30 p.m.—Latter occupation proves boring. Play strenuous game of table tennis, which develops an appetite for the fish and chips which Mr. Assistant has miraculously produced from seemingly nowhere—probably some more of his synthetic food!

9 p.m.—Patrol the roof in slacks and tin helmet for the benefit of the local policemen, A.F.S., and A.R.P.

9.30 p.m.—Retire for blissful night's rest on camp beds, which seem to get harder and develop more "large lumps" each time I sleep on them.

December 1st.

8.30 a.m.—Awakened by Mr. Assistant, who has one eye open and one eye shut, and is carrying a cup of tea in each hand. He gives them to us while muttering something about it being half-past eight and time we got up.

9. a.m.—Whole building is filled with the odour of fried bacon, which we have had for breakfast. I remember that it is time to put on a clean white coat. This procedure entails the moving of buttons from the dirty to the clean coat, which means a matter of about five minutes, though double that time when it is nine o'clock.

9.10 a.m.—Bid a respectful "Good morning" to the manager and several not-quite-so-respectful "Good mornings" to other members of the staff.

9.20 a.m.—(Note ten minutes' interval for chat with Lady Dispenser). Take up a duster—the apprentice's mascot—and a systematic dusting (that is what it pleases me to call it) ensues. The alternate blowing and flicking of some dozens of bottles produces quite a good effect. A blow on some "Asthma Remedy," a flick on some "Blood Purifier" combined with the moving of several bottles of "Gripe Mixture"—only the dusted ones to the front of the fixture, and the result is, on the whole, quite satisfactory. (Of course, this is only what the apprentice thinks—and what she thinks doesn't matter anyway!)

10.30 a.m.—Lunch. Retire to tea room for light refreshment.

10.45 a.m.—Return. Lady Dispenser discusses with Gentleman Manager, the ailments of Lord Highbrow's Alsatian and Lady Snob's pekinese. Ends up about the film at the Odeon last night.

11.30 a.m.—Territorial General Manager arrives. Everyone unusually busy for once in a while.

11.40 a.m.—Territorial General Manager and Branch Manager disappear for cup of coffee, while rest of staff make whoopee in their absence.

12 noon.—Return of Territorial General Manager whom I dodge successfully until he corners me in the dispensary, where the much-dreaded cross examination on Apprentice Training Papers is carried out.

1.15-2.30 p.m.—Dinner—which has previously been placed in gas oven to cook.

2.30-4 p.m.—Hours for study spent in men's tea room in easy chair placed next to the radiator, with my feet on another chair. From under the camouflage of lectures on Forensic Pharmacy I take a copy of "Jane Eyre." This proves quite interesting until the manager, who is also my tutor, comes in to go through my papers with me!

4 p.m.—Old lady presents me with a recipe. Proves to be a concoction of many evils which requires a considerable knowledge of maths. Struggling with the percentages.

4.10 p.m.—Still Struggling.

4.15 p.m.—Dame's getting impatient—wants to catch a 'bus and she will have to wait an hour if she misses this one. The usual story. Finished at last. I hope it doesn't kill her!

5 p.m.—Write out special Orders and cash up. Watch the clock.

5.25 p.m.—Bid “Good night” to Manager and Territorial General Manager and hurry to catch the next ‘bus home.

So ends my day at Boots, The Chemists.

POSTSCRIPT.

I hope I haven’t given the idea that Pharmacy is all play and no work—on the contrary, it will be the reverse, so I hear, when I go to college two years from now. However, as this is the practical course, I am making the most of it while it lasts and, believe me, it’s grand fun!

C. E. SANDERS.

Manchester Express.

I boarded the train just as it was moving off. It was a dull, foggy day in early spring, and I was going to Manchester. I shuddered. In just under an hour I should be stepping out into the grey drizzle of rain so usual in that city. How I hated trains and Manchester, and most of all I hated that drab, depressing railway carriage with its steamy windows and dark smoke-laden atmosphere. After I had surveyed the compartment with intense dislike I looked round for something fresh to hate, and began gazing critically at my fellow passengers.

Opposite me sat a fat woman wearing a black striped coat and a black hat. Why do fat women always wear striped coats? She was knitting something coarse, dark blue and thick. Mittens for inhabitants of a workhouse. I crazily concluded. The steel needles clicked in dull monotony.

Next to the fat woman sat a dapper little man. He sported a brilliant green suit, a bright blue overcoat and a horrifying crimson tie. He fidgeted first with his undersized moustache, then with his elegantly manicured finger nails. I hated him more than the fat old woman.

Next to him reclined a modern young lady absorbed in studying a film magazine. Her whole appearance screamed “movie magazine” at you. Her hat, shoes, costume, hair style and the shape of her pencilled eyebrows were each characteristics of different film stars. If she had only kept to one star as a model the effect might have been more satisfactory. I thought. I hated her unoriginality.

In the corner sat the man who slept. He slept through everything. He was fat, and wore tweed plus-fours. He was sunk into his corner with his legs sprawled across the floor, and he snored and snored. This added to the clicking of the knitting needles was insufferable.

Most of the side of the carriage where I was sitting was taken up by a multitude of bags, baskets and brown paper parcels, and a shabby woman with a sleeping baby in her arms. On either side of her a small, noisy child clamoured for something out of one of the bags or baskets. She refused to give it to them, and one of the small boys stuffed his tiny fists into his eyes—I was sure there were no tears there—and howled at the top of his voice. This awakened the baby who also howled. The woman then asked me to hold the baby for a moment while she dealt with the boy. What had I done to deserve that? Having slapped the small boy soundly, she rummaged in all the bags and baskets until she found a slab of chocolate for the baby. He licked it until it was beautifully sticky then smeared it all over his face, hands and jersey and later decided to transfer the chocolate from his hands on to the front of my dress. Until that moment I had considered turquoise blue and chocolate brown a delightful colour scheme.

The woman having reclaimed her tiresome offspring, I turned my attention to the last of my fellow travellers, a stockbroker's clerk. It was perfectly obvious from his appearance that he was a clerk. I had gathered that he was a stockbroker's clerk from the fact that for the last half-hour he had been closely scanning the stock exchange news in his paper. How depressingly respectable he looked. I turned from this ordinary personage in disgust, and gazed idly out at the window.

Suddenly, just as the train passed out of a tunnel, a bright beam of sunlight pierced the foggy atmosphere of the compartment. The sky had become blue and the spring sunshine was brilliant. The sun was shining and we were nearing Manchester! The baby began to crow happily; the woman who was knitting the workhouse mittens—I decided that after all it might be a pullover for someone in the navy—looked up and smiled cheerfully; the rather faded face of the mother lit up; the dapper, little man stopped worrying his moustache and grinned merrily; the girl reading the film magazine also raised her head and smiled. She

was quite pretty really. The stockbroker's clerk looked really jolly too. The fat man awoke with a start as the bright sunbeams played on his face, and he let out a hearty guffaw of laughter. We all laughed; laughed, as the train entered Manchester station.

JOYCE PLESTERS (Upper V).

A Queer Sensation.

I found myself in a very small room. It had a very small door, a window, and a number of wires. I moved and found myself strapped to a seat. I looked up at the window but could see nothing.

After a while a beam of light came through the window, and I could see the sun. I sat still for a while, very cold, and there was a continual drum in my ears. I then released myself from the straps, the room suddenly turned and I fell against the wall. I got up again, stepped on my seat, and looked through the window. Above was the blue sky and below was a billowy mass which looked like snow.

A man then crawled through the door, and told me I was in an aeroplane, and that it was out of control and going to crash. I looked through the window again. The 'plane was racing towards earth, the houses getting larger and larger. We were just crashing as I seemed to come into a new world. I was awake. It had been a dream.

JEAN PADDOCK (Low. IV b).

Fishing To-day.

We set out from Lowestoft in our little fishing smack. We were making for the Dogger Bank to fish for herrings. Half-way there we were told that a German aircraft was approaching our way. About five minutes later we heard a German 'plane approaching. The gunner manned the Lewis gun and we all prepared for action. The man in the crows nest reported that the plane was diving on our ship. We all lay flat on the deck, except the gunner, who let the German have it. He dropped six bombs, but did not hit us. The 'plane was badly hit and made off for home. We got to the Bank and had a good catch, and returned home with only a few scratches from shrapnel.

SUMMERS (IIIb).

Shopping.

It is a joyous adventure, a journey into the unknown—no, perhaps not unknown, since every experienced shopper knows the best place to buy his goods. Yet, one never knows entirely what will be the outcome of a shopping expedition. So many things intervene. The prospect has a dazzling uncertainty, with the element of luck playing a prominent part.

From the time when one sets out, there is a feeling of anticipation, a sense of going into battle for a worthy end. (I can almost hear the groans of those who find shopping a bore, but no matter!) The very conductor on the 'bus is a figure to be regarded with awe, a kind of guide who, for the paltry sum of twopence, will set you down in the heart of the town, calling out the while, in a lugubrious tone of voice, the names of streets in rapid sequence. The 'bus is no more a mundane thing, but a magic vehicle, a winged chariot, flying along without effort—until a sudden jolt brings us back to our senses, and we realise that pedestrian crossings, policemen and traffic lights do exist.

To walk along the street and gaze in the shop windows so temptingly arrayed, is the biggest thrill of all. Now is the time to search for shopping lists and to enter the shop firmly, surrounded by an aura of authority. Snares are laid to catch the unwary. Notices, very brightly hued, are placed at intervals to catch the attention, variously inscribed with tempting details of bargains offered. The seasoned shopper passes on with never a second thought, intent upon his own secret designs, not to be distracted by these blandishments. To pause and hesitate is to be lost. This is the fate of the inexperienced. And a moment later, flushed with triumph and with lighter pockets, the thought occurs, "Now why did I buy that?"

It is amazing, the feeling of power that one enjoys through the mere possession of a few shillings when there is a large store to wander through. Obsequious menials rush to do your bidding, pouring forth comments the while on weather, politics and any subject which will prevent a customer from escaping their clutches. You, with the lofty superiority, engendered by the possession of comparative wealth, can afford to smile at the "foiled searchings of mortality" as the assistants scurry to and fro. The lift boy is a lesser mortal, the contemplation of whom gives a feeling of superiority.

But oh! the woeful difference in the attitude of one's fellow shoppers. Here is suspicion blended with consciousness of equal worth. No vestige of meekness can be discerned in the truculent demeanour of the large lady on the left, who is obviously striving to obtain that very bargain which is the goal of your own desire. She meets stare with stare, indignation with supercilious scorn, and literally shoulders her way to the counter and succeeds in her malicious design. You are left with aching feet, and a feeling that shopping is not a pure unalloyed joy, but rather an arduous task.

M. AUSTIN (VI).

Memories of Early Childhood.

We are constantly being told that it is not good for us to live entirely in the past; that we should live in, and for the present. But surely those people who have no world of memories into which they can retreat when they are feeling particularly unhappy or depressed must live in a singularly meaningless and comfortless life. Some of the outstanding events of our lives are happy and some are sad, some thrilling and some frightening, but time mellows even the most unpleasant of incidents into an amusing, even a happy memory. After a while we are able to view a happening more objectively. Things which at the time seem to be matters of the utmost importance and significance become, with the passing of time, less vital and all-important.

One of my very earliest memories is of a dog; a large brown and white spaniel with an unlimited supply of patience, who went by the name of Mick. He was, to a small person of two, a deliciously soft and cuddlesome animal. He viewed with tolerance a small tornado who would rush at him, screaming with delight, butt him, and roll over and over with him on the rug. He even seemed to enjoy having his long silken ears pulled. But Mick was only one member of "my zoc." Among the others was a cheeky yellow canary who adored company, an exceptionally large and amiable ginger cat, a fluffy white rabbit with pink eyes and ears, a sleek coated black pony and a black lamb; all of which occupy a very prominent place in my memory.

Now, when I think of a cow (if ever I **am** forced to consider that worthy creature) I visualise an amiable, benevolent animal with large soulful eyes. It is difficult

to believe that there was a time when I considered the cow the most terrifying and formidable of God's creatures. One of my most amusing memories concerns a cow, or perhaps I should say several cows. It is easy to look back on that incident now with nothing but amusement. At the time I was completely terrified. My aunt and I were paying a visit to a farm and were being conducted on a tour of inspection by the farmer. During the course of our wanderings I managed, with consummate skill, to get myself left behind in the dairy, gazing fascinated, at a separating machine which greatly intrigued me. After a while I looked up to see, not my aunt, but a whole herd of enormous animals with large fierce eyes advancing on me. I was too terrified to do anything but stare in horrified amazement. My agitation was so great that I bit several large pieces out of a rubber ball. Did it enter my head to consider that the one impulse that swept the whole of that herd was not to annihilate me, but to get to their evening meal? If you are in any doubt, I can assure you it did not. I do not think I have ever experienced so great a feeling of relief as when, with a condescending glance, those cows nonchalantly passed on their way.

A memory that remains with me very clearly is of the first time I went to school. I remember very clearly that I was full of speculations as to what school was going to be like, but I most definitely was **not** frightened or even slightly apprehensive. I may have been frightened by cows but people never did have that effect on me. My first impression was of a large room, the walls of which were completely covered with pictures and crayon drawings by the pupils. At a table at the far end of the room the teacher was arranging flowers in gaily enamelled jam jars; the monitors for the week busily running backwards and forwards, placing the jars on window sills and tables. It was the first of many happy days, and some boring days, spent at school.

Such are some of the exhibits in my collection of memories. As a collector of stamps or antiques experiences pleasure in bringing out his specimens from time to time to review them, so, even in this world of bustle and hurry I sometimes find time to sit by the fire and to—remember.

M. GOODALL (Upper V).

An Elogy on Elms.

(a disease is destroying a large number of English Elms).

Oh, well-aday for you, our quiet friends!
If you should perish, what should make amends?
England and Elms—the two words run together
Like sun and happy thoughts in summer weather,
When one without the other cannot be.

What child of England, driven to foreign realms,
Brooding on home, but pictures English Elms,
In the green meadow; or along the lane
The homeward path he yearns to tread again,
Or sees their branches 'gainst the winter sky,
Snow laden, woven in delicate tracery.

Beeches are noble ladies, oaks are Kings,
Birches are fairies with green silken wings,
Alders are wise and sad, and pollard willows
Are gnomes and sprites among the misty shadows,
Threatening us thro' the mists the river sends.
But Oh! the elms, the elms are all our friends:
As dear to us as to the kine who browse
In their cool shade or munch their lowest boughs.

Oh, stealthily it swept across the seas,
And crept along the land, that dark disease,
And on our trees it laid its withering hand:
And all along the land,
You find a tree with branches sickly yellow,
And one that should have been its flourishing fellow,
Thick with ten thousand leaves, all green and quick;
It points to heaven a leafless, lifeless stick.

Strangers have come from many a foreign shore,
And some who claim to have lived with us before,
And to our landscape only have been lost
Through long continuance of untimely frost.
Hemlocks and thuyas and the cypresses
In every garden plot they take their ease,
And o'er the woodlands, high and ever higher,
The Noah's Ark tree points its growing spire:
And they are welcome—these new foreign trees,
But not the best, and not the host of these,
Could they our land with verdure overwhelm,
Would comfort us for our familiar elm.

If elms should perish, what should greet the spring
With crimson clouds on sunny evening?
What trees at Hallowe'en would light the land?
Oh, not as trees, as very saints they stand,
Shining in glory like the holy ones
With raiment borrowed from the setting suns!
And now the wind, whirling the leaves around,
Has laid the lovely garment on the ground.

If elms should perish quite from shore to shore,
England would be the land we know no more.

M. PARKER (Low. V.).

Spring Cleaning.

What a nuisance is spring cleaning! From the start I will not pretend that I contribute greatly to the job, for, willing as I am to help, I am usually politely (or sometimes impolitely) told to "please get out of the way!"

However, one day, about two years ago, I was told that if I had nothing to do I could clear out the box room. Searching wildly in my mind for some supposedly before-arranged occupation, I vaguely informed my mother that I was "going out somewhere," whereupon I was promptly told that I could cancel the arrangements and set to work.

Thus, donning an apron, I did set to work with as much good will as I could muster. Upon entering the box room I saw such a litter of boxes and discarded furniture as it was possible to imagine! I had vague ideas that to clean out a room one had to turn everything out and sweep, dust and polish the room. So after much grumbling and groaning I finally managed to clear one half of the room, ignoring the frequent calls of my mother, who must have thought that at the very least I was pulling the house down!

After I had swept and dusted, I felt quite proud of myself, and called downstairs for some kind person to bring up the polish, as I could not get out of the door. Some kind person did send it up, and I polished industriously for about half an hour.

Then the trouble began. I started to move the furniture back, and to pile the boxes up neatly. The dust from the uncleaned half of the room came over with the furniture, and covered my clean floors and doors with a thin layer of dust! Angrily reaching forward to dust everything again, the heel of my shoe caught in the tin of polish, which I had carelessly left lying on the floor, and bang, I landed on the other side of the room!

By this time I felt very miserable, but I was determined not to be deterred. So once again I set to work, this time plus a few bruises and scratches, and worked for another hour. Meanwhile, my mother, who was not used to such hard work on my part, came upstairs to see what I was doing, and as she stood in the doorway she laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks! I indignantly asked her what the matter was, for I considered that I had worked very well indeed.

"If only you could see yourself," she sobbed, laughing helplessly.

Rushing round to my bedroom, I gazed at myself and I suppose I did make a funny sight, although I must admit that I was too vexed to see the funny side of it. Down both of my cheeks was smeared red floor polish, while I should imagine that at least half of the same had been transferred from the tin to the front of my apron. To complete the picture, a feather from an old cushion had somehow got into my hair, and I looked for all the world like a Red Indian!

However, when I look back to that day, I consider I did a very good day's work, and what is more, I received extra pocket money that week.

Now I take more care with my appearance when I help to do the springcleaning, for I consider it is very annoying to be laughed at after a good three hours' work has just been completed!

BETTY BAYLIS (Upper V).

National Savings.

This is the shortest term of the year and, as this report has to be made soon after half term, it covers only a very brief period. It does not include Alcester Warship Week, which is just ahead, and which should cause a good increase in the totals of each of our savings groups.

Up to the present the boys have reached a grand total of £327, which represents an increase of £14 since January. Another eighteen certificates have been purchased by members. While these figures are encouraging, the Secretary (Mr. E. W. Hadwen) thinks that many of the older members have lost some of their enthusiasm for saving. Stamps can be bought on Wednesdays at 1.15 p.m.

In the Girls' Group, savings amount to £700 from the beginning of the financial year, April, 1941. The Secretary (Miss A. M. Weatherup) points out that the aim of at least £1,000 by April, 1942, can only be reached if all make their best effort.

The boys of Forms i and ii have saved the sum of £65 since September 1941, when they separated from the older boys. This amount is the result of steady and enthusiastic saving.

Oxford School Certificate Examination.

In the examination held in December, certificates were gained by the following:—M. A. Cheffins (3 credits); D. E. W. Spencer (6 credits); *G. R. W. Spencer (7 credits).

*Qualified to claim exemption from London Matriculation examination.

Debating Society.

President:

MISS EVANS.

Secretary:

P. CRESSWELL.

Committee:

G. SPENCER, P. CRESSWELL, O. DAVIES. STEWART,
ARNOLD, SHARP.

At the request of several members of the Upper School this term a new committee was formed for the Debating Society, and the first meeting was held on January 21st. It was agreed that two debates should be held this term, the first being arranged for February 27th. The subject: "This house is convinced that in the New Order, women deserve equal status with men," was keenly argued, and great promise was shown in speeches by a few of the new members, while improvement was noted in the older speakers. The end of a very enjoyable debate, during which Miss Evans had hard work to moderate the excitement, resulted in a victory of 28 votes to 18 for the opposition. This meeting was a great improvement on the debate held last year, and with the continued support and enthusiasm of both old and new members, the Debating Society will be restored to its old level.

P. M. C.

Scouts.

Owing to the large increase in numbers it has been thought advisable for the senior scouts to concentrate on their Cadet Corps work for the duration of the war. As a result, several of the middle school scouts have now become patrol leaders and have thus been given an opportunity to show their ability in controlling and helping the juniors. It is hoped that they will endeavour to make good use of this opening. We urge all scouts to try and take their work seriously and to reach a high proficiency standard as early as possible.

E. S. WALKER.

Scoutmaster

Cadet Corps.

O.C.—Captain V. V. DRULLER.

At the end of the Christmas Term the Corps unfortunately lost the services of Captain Hall. Captain Hall was the Officer in Command of the Corps from its birth, and all the senior cadets will remember him as one who not only carried out the duties of an officer excellently, but could also be looked upon as a friend. We have however been lucky enough to obtain the services of Mr. Druller as Commanding Officer, with Mr. Hadwen and Mr. Thornton as junior officers.

The whole of the Corps has been measured for battle dress, and all hope that in the next week or two the new uniforms will arrive. Meanwhile the routine work of the Corps goes on, in the form of foot drill, arms drill, map reading, aircraft recognition, etc., in all of which all Cadets are becoming efficient. It is very satisfactory to be able to report that the keenness of all Cadets is being maintained. The membership of the Corps is at present thirty-four.

A. D. C.

Hockey.

Captain : P. CRESSWELL.

With the return of Miss Philips and the beginning of the New Year in comparatively good weather, hockey enthusiasts settled down to the prospect of an uninterrupted term of hockey. Any such hopes were dispelled by the heavy fall of snow within the second week after the return to school, and until after half-term the pitch was too hard for any game of hockey to be played. Consequently it has been necessary to cancel the first two fixtures, while one still remains to be played against Bromsgrove C.H.S. Then the team will feel the loss of the centre half, the only person leaving the team early in the season, and one who did such valuable work last term.

The representatives of the school during the season have been:—B. Jobson, J. Blakeman, M. Parker, J. Lloyd, P. Midlane, G. Spencer, B. North, M. Barker, J. Chatwin, P. Cresswell, J. Allen.

P. M. C.

Football.

Captain.—COLLINS.

Owing to the fact that the football pitch was under snow for full two weeks, and since then has been frozen hard, the two fixtures before half-term, with Redditch C.H.S. and Evesham P.H.G.S. had to be cancelled. We look forward, however, to fulfilling the remaining fixtures, as the pitch is now returning to a more satisfactory state. At the beginning of the term we lost one member of the team, but we are sincerely hoping that, though up to the present we have been unlucky, we shall obtain some victories before the season ends.

A. D. C.

For the Juniors.**My Dog.**

My little dog's name is Bonzo. He is a very mischievous little dog; he is a terrier, and he is white with few big black spots. He eats all the cat's food as well as his own, and he even eats the chicken's food. He thinks that it's great fun chasing the horses, and biting the pigs to make them squeal. He's always fighting.

E. LYON-SMITH (Remove).

Fairy Fay.

There was a little fairy,
Her name was Fay,
She was very pretty,
She was very gay,
She lived in a wood,
In an old Oak tree,
Sipped dew from the flowers,
Then flew away for a spree.

C. HOWES (Remove).

Snow.

In winter comes the snow,
And makes a pretty show,
In the night,
'Neath the moonlight,
When we're asleep,
In our dreams so deep,
The snow comes falling down,
On every village, city, town.

P. BOOTH (Form II).